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NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANY.

BOTANY.

RE-SPINDLING OF CORN.—I cannot send you a specimen, but I can give you a fact in reference to tassels at the end of the ears of corn.

In the year 1863 I lived about seven miles from Chippewa Falls in this State. There was an acre of corn directly before our cabin door. On the night of the 11th of July of that year a severe frost killed all the tassels which were then just shooting distinctly above the leaves. Though checked in growth the corn finally set for ears, put out its silks (pistils), and also sent forth a new tassel or spindle from *the end of the ear*. This spindle at the end of the ear was a common thing over the whole acre. Mrs. C. and myself often remarked about it at the time as a curious effort of nature to repair damages. The early frosts again in the fall cut off the corn before it matured, but there were cases which we thought would have fructified and matured from this attempt had the season been longer. In most instances, however, the silks were dry before the spindle at the end of the ear shed its pollen.—CHARLES CAVERNO, *Lake Mills, Wis.*

THE EARLIEST KNOWN CONIFEROUS TREE.—Allow me to say, with reference to a notice copied in your May number from the “Academy,” that the opinion respecting the plant above named attributed to Mr. Carruthers is an entire mistake. *Prototaxites Loganii* is an exogenous tree, with bark, rings of growth, medullary rays and well-developed, though peculiar woody tissue; and, if Mr. Carruthers has made such a blunder as that attributed to him, this can only be excused by defective observations or imperfect specimens.—J. W. DAWSON.

THE CHESTNUT TREE.—Have we two species of Chestnut here in New England? I refer to the common *Castanea vesca*, Var. *Americana*. My friend F. J. Kingsbury Esq., informs me that lumbermen distinguish two very marked varieties by the *wood*. One *white*, the other *red* and less hard and strong. I conjecture that this difference depends solely upon the manner of growth,

young and vigorous trees furnishing the whiter wood.—H. F. BASSETT.

[These differences in the wood, in this and other trees, are not accompanied by recognizable differences in their foliage, etc.; they are not even *botanical* varieties: the cause of the difference is unknown.—Eds.

WASPS CARRY OFF STAMENS BODILY.—Ch. Morren, of Belgium, is the authority for the statement, that, having noticed that the stamens and pistils of certain Fuchsias were unaccountably removed, he set a watch and found that they were carried off by wasps; and the wasps were observed flying about the garden with the stamens in their mandibles. *Vespa nidulans* was the culprit. What use they make of them is not explained.—*Gard. Chronicle*, April 15.



ZOOLOGY.

ANATOMY OF THE SKUNK.—As lizards, toads and snakes had become nice playthings, I had a desire to test the virtues of a skunk with the dissecting knife. Boys and others had skinned the animal by the thousands; so I thought that task not very formidable, and at it I went. The truth is it was not the nicest job I ever did in my life, and the fellow was as fat as his skin could hold; for I got four pounds of the purest, most pliable oil I ever saw. It was mainly pure oleine, with a little margaric acid—as good as neat's foot oil for harness and boots, but with no medical virtue.

I approached the vital organs of the Mephitis with suitable care. I first examined the teeth, as being furthest off. Next I cut off the shoulder and breast just back of the ribs. The lungs were large, the heart fully developed, and the liver enormous. The stomach contained the crop and intestines of at least one of my Thanksgiving pot-pie chickens; so it gave no light on its usual food, except that chickens' corn, oats and flesh were there. The intestines were very broad, and seemed as if mainly made of colon, with hardly a trace of jejunum or ileum. The kidneys were remarkably large, but neither by odor nor by the microscope, showed any singularity; their internal portions were very like those in man.

I approached the pelvis with great caution, and almost superstitious fear. I disjoined first each femur, and left bare the innom-